

CITY OF HAMILTON

MOTION

Emergency and Community Services Committee: September 21, 2023

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR M. WILSON
SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR

Gender Based Safety Audit

WHEREAS, the City of Hamilton strives to apply an equity lens to its activities to identify and remove barriers and to support best practices in planning, budgeting, implementation and evaluation of its operations, programs and services;

WHEREAS, Hamilton City Council’s 2022-2026 term priorities include the goal of safe and thriving neighbourhoods;

WHEREAS, in the United Nations report “[Cities Alive: Designing Cities That Work For Women](#)”, it is stated that “without a gender-responsive approach to urban planning, cities often compound gender inequalities that restrict women’s social and economic opportunities, health and wellbeing, sense of safety and security, and access to justice and equity”;

WHEREAS, people who identify as women in Hamilton were significantly less likely than men to feel very safe when walking alone after dark (34% versus 63%) ([Statistics Canada, Safe Cities Profile Series: Key indicators by census metropolitan area, May 2020](#));

WHEREAS, people who identified as women in Hamilton were significantly more likely to experience unwanted sexual behaviour in public than men (34% versus 15%) (Statistics, Canada, 2020);

WHEREAS, of those who experienced a physical or sexual assault or unwanted sexual behaviour, one in ten (10%) Hamilton residents said the most serious incident took place on public transit (Statistics, Canada, 2020);

WHEREAS, recent [HSR reports](#) stated that the majority of HSR ridership identify as women;

WHEREAS, most Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ people surveyed in a 2019 community report responded that they felt less safe outside of their housing, on the street, or in their neighbourhood ([Mapping the Void: Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ Experience in Hamilton](#), 2019);

WHEREAS, on March 29, 2023, [Hamilton City Council](#) directed staff to conduct a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) review of the five City-owned escarpment staircases and report back on recommendations to improve the safety of escarpment staircase use specifically to prevent sexual violence;

WHEREAS, the National Inquiry for into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls delivered 231 Calls for Justice and recognizes the systemic racism, violence and abuse against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people across Canada;

WHEREAS, a motion was passed at the Audit, Finance and Administration Committee on February 16, 2023 stating that the Hamilton Women and Gender Committee, Citizen Committee Report, respecting Applying a gender lens to the City of Hamilton budget, be received and referred to staff for report back to the Audit, Finance and Administration Committee in advance of the 2024 budget process on how a gender-based lens can be applied through a municipal budgeting process;

WHEREAS, there are statistical differences in gender-based access to various transport modes, especially in the lower percentage of women cycling then men, and how safe and comfortable they feel using them;

WHEREAS, gender-based outreach for the public bike share program in partnership with the Everyone Rides Initiative has resulted in more gender parity amongst bike share users;

WHEREAS, gender-based safety audits have been defined as a process which brings individuals together to walk through a physical environment, evaluate how safe it feels to them, identify ways to make the space safer and organize to bring about these changes;

WHEREAS, a gender-based safety audit prioritizes the experience and knowledge of women and gender-diverse individuals living in a neighbourhood and/or using a community space as experts in their own safety, comfort, dignity, and accessibility needs;

WHEREAS, violence is one of the priorities of the Community Safety and Well Being Plan and increasing the awareness of gender-based violence and developing safety resources has been recognized as a more specific area for attention;

WHEREAS, community driven hate reporting tools can further our understanding of areas of the city that require support to address safety concerns; and

WHEREAS, on August 18, 2023, City Council declared gender-based violence and intimate-partner violence an epidemic in Hamilton.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

- (a) That the YWCA lead the development of gender-based safety audits in Hamilton working in collaboration with City staff and community partners; and

- (b) That staff continue to work closely with the Community Safety and Well Being System Leadership Table to increase awareness of gender-based violence and explore opportunities for further action; and
- (c) That the aim of the safety audit review is to collect and compile evidence-based data, inputs, suggestions and recommendations on barriers to women, girls and gender-diverse individuals' safety and security in public spaces with a particular focus on the following realms:
 - (i) Future LRT Station design;
 - (ii) Select HSR stops and operations
 - (iii) City of Hamilton park redevelopment plans
 - (iv) City of Hamilton recreation facilities
 - (v) City streets and/or intersections
 - (vi) Any other space highlighted by audit participants
- (d) That the goal of the reviews will be to understand women and gender-diverse persons' key safety concerns in city spaces and to bring about improvements to the physical environments to remove hazards and improve feelings of safety along with any policy and/or operational recommendations and evidence-based actions to improve the service delivery and public infrastructure based on the audit findings; and
- (e) That staff be authorized to provide one-time funding in the amount of \$100,000 from the Building Safer Communities Fund (ID 679114) to support the safety review in collaboration with community partners.